

## CLAIMS

1 1. A composite material comprising a mixture of:

2 a. papermaking sludge in granulated form; and

3 b. a polymer composition comprising a synthetic polymer resin.

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1 2. The material of claim 1 wherein the sludge comprises at least 5% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

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1 3. The material of claim 1 wherein the sludge comprises at least 20% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

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1 4. The material of claim 1 wherein the sludge comprises at least 50% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

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1 5. The material of claim 1 wherein the sludge comprises at least 70% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

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1 6. The material of claim 1 wherein the sludge is highly porous.

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1 7. The material of claim 1 wherein the polymer composition is a plastic.  
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1 8. The material of claim 7 wherein the plastic comprises at least one of high-density  
2 polyethylene, low-density polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, and nylon.

1 9. The material of claim 1 wherein the mixture is amenable to processing by at least one of  
2 extrusion, injection molding, and compression molding.

1 10. The material of claim 1 further comprising cellulose fibers.

1 11. The material of claim 10 wherein the cellulose fibers are in the form of rice hulls.

1 12. A method of making a composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

- 2 a. combining papermaking sludge in granulated form with a a polymer  
3 composition comprising a synthetic polymer resin; and  
4 b. extruding, injection molding, or compression molding the mixture.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein the sludge comprises at least 5% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the sludge comprises at least 20% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

1 15. The method of claim 12 wherein the sludge comprises at least 50% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

1 16. The method of claim 12 wherein the sludge comprises at least 70% by weight of the  
2 mixture.

1 17. The method of claim 12 wherein the sludge is highly porous.

1 18. The method of claim 12 wherein the polymer composition is a plastic.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the plastic comprises at least one of high-density  
2 polyethylene, low-density polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, and nylon.

1 20. The method of claim 1 wherein the combining step further comprising adding  
2 cellulose fibers to the sludge and polymer composition.

1     21. The method of claim 20 wherein the cellulose fibers are in the form of rice hulls.